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NOTES

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY
IN ROME

The American Academy in Rome, which has just announced another competition for scholarships in architecture, painting, and sculpture, was made the subject of addresses at the annual dinner of the Architectural League of New York, given on the twenty-eighth of January. Mr. C. Grant La Farge, the President of the League, presided, and the speakers were Mr. Lloyd C. Griscom, former Ambassador to Italy; Mr. John L. Cadwalader, Mr. Edwin H. Blashfield, and Mr. Frank Miles Day. Mr. Blashfield said:

"I am asked to speak tonight for the painters; but for painters or sculptors or architects the American Academy in Rome is the same thing. It serves us all. For forty years our young people have been flocking to Europe to study painting, sculpture, architecture. They began at a time when to study with advantage in America was nearly impossible. In 1866 William Morris Hunt said to me 'Go straight to Europe'; anything that you learn in America will have to be unlearned.

"We have changed all that; today our schools are excellent; our boys and girls can learn the spelling and grammar of their art here as well as anywhere, and stand as solidly planted upon their technique in the studios of New York as in the ateliers of Paris. Logically, therefore, to the swarms of students who go to Europe today are added the swarms which come from all parts of this country to our great cities—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago. These young people batter at the gateways of success demanding recognition; they take medals in our home schools; in foreign cities they take them over the heads of those who are native to the place. In this great number of ambitious young people there must be many, very many, who are worth helping. There are those who are not only clever but industrious, who have not only brilliancy but staying power; in three words, who have talent and character. If we, as a body of art lovers, can

give the help and encouragement which such young people deserve, they may become national assets.

"Charles Follen McKim saw this and worked for it for a dozen years; now that he has gone we must all of us take up the succession and work in turn till the end is attained. He expected it of us and we must not fail in fulfilment. He worked for the allied arts, for sculptors and painters as well as architects. The concrete realization of his hopes now stands in Rome and it must not pass away; it must stand until in a couple of hundred years it is at least as famous as is the École Française upon the Monte Pincio today. The men are very few who have the faith to move mountains, but McKim had that faith and we cannot afford to let our inheritance of it from him lapse. That is why we say to everyone who loves art—help us—help us by your good will and enthusiasm, to keep the school where he put it.

"The City of Rome is a treasury; a treasury into which races have poured their effort; twice it has headed the world—under the Cæsars and under the Popes. The painter may follow in Rome the entire gamut of decorative painting—from the early Christian mosaics through the springtime of the fourteenth and fifteenth century art to the noontide of the High Renaissance. Rome was the reservoir which received the art of Greece that fed the stream from which the modern nations have drawn. McKim and the founders of the American Academy have planned to turn that stream through our own American fields and to make that treasury a cloister—a cloister where our best young men, our post-graduates, may for a time be separated from all that is disturbing, all that is too immediate to have stood the test of time, be it even the wonderful art of modern Paris. We need teachers and examples, but not so much those which are at our side as those which are further away. The painter may follow Titian and Michelangelo and Veronese, may follow them with profit because they are so far before us that we see them in the proper proportion and perspective, but if we climb directly be-

hind some modern master, in his immediate footstep, we remain in his shadow always.

"Our young men go to Rome to select from the great museums; not to learn processes but to consider results; toward which results or their like, when we have chosen the most fitting, we may turn the processes which we have perfected at home. We in America are clever at processes, but we lack the background for results. That is why Americans may study wisely in the city, where in a historic perspective, made real by visible remains, epoch rises behind epoch, like the range of seats of Rome's own Colosseum, and where each would-be sower can find seed to his fancy, digging where civilizations lie many strata deep.

"The architects of America are building the West and rebuilding the East; let us hope that they may find apprentices now and successors by and by in the American Academy in Rome."

MEDALS FOR HOUSE FRONTS The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects has announced its intention of giving medals to the owners of tenement and apartment houses meritorious in design. The object of the award is to encourage the erection of houses which will add to the beauty and attractiveness of the city, and the basis of judgment will be the street façades of tenement houses less than six stories and of apartment houses more than six stories in height which have been erected within two years of the date of the award. The jury will be composed of five members of the New York Chapter, and assurance of co-operation has already been received from the Tenement House Commissioner, Mr. John J. Murphy, who has shown great interest in the project. Recognition of the possible interest of the elevations of this class of buildings will, it is thought, stimulate future builders to erect with more forethought of beauty in relation to city street scenery. The plan is, in a measure, experimental, and the exact system to be followed will have to be carefully worked out, but it should prove effectual in

arousing interest and developing civic pride. "The hope is," the President of the New York Chapter, Mr. Arnold W. Brunner, is quoted as having said, "that it may encourage the owners and builders of the great stretches of streets through which the citizens must pass to make them a little more humane and livable.

A NEW MUSEUM FEATURE The Chicago artists may or may not be prophets, but they certainly are not without honor in

their own country. Quite recently the Art Institute has set aside one of its galleries for a continuous exhibition of the works of artists residing in Chicago and its vicinity. Not more than two works by any one artist will be exhibited at the same time, nor more than four during the year. This is the outcome of the annual exhibition held in the Art Institute in January which attained an exceptionally high standard. The jury elected by the artists for that exhibition has been continued for a year and has made from the exhibition and in the artists' studios selections for the continuous exhibit. All expenses, including insurance, are paid by the Art Institute, which assumes both responsibility and control. As the chief object of an Art Museum is to promote the cause of art in its own locality this seems an eminently logical procedure and one which other institutions of the same character might well emulate.

STATE ART COMMISSION A bill has been introduced into the State Legislature of Massachusetts authorizing the creation of an Art Commission, consisting of five citizens to be appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Council. The commissioners are to serve without compensation, but need not, it would seem, according to the wording of the bill, be either artists or experts. The duty of the Commission is to act in an advisory capacity relative to the creation, acquisition, construction, erection, or remodeling by the commonwealth of any work of art, and to the artistic character of any building erected or remodeled by the commonwealth or